October 2013

Smokejumper Obituary: Muraro, John (Missoula 1957)

National Smokejumper Association

Smokejumper Obituary

Muraro, John (Missoula 1957)

John, 78, died Sept. 20, 2013, in Victoria, British Columbia. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in Fire Science from Montana State University in 1960, and immediately began his professional career with the Canadian Forest Service at the newly opened Federal Research Institute in Victoria.

Prior to attending college, John was a timber cruiser in the Nelson Forest office in British Columbia, whose district forester urged him to continue his education. John jumped at Missoula during the 1957-60 seasons.

John's collaboration and support from others resulted in new technologies, products and tools. One of his first projects in the Canadian Forest Service led to John's effective ignition techniques for both logging slash and standing timber fires. He and colleagues also developed airborne ignition machines including the helitorch and a dispenser of injected spherical incendiaries.

These machines and techniques are in use globally today. John and colleagues also produced automated fire weather stations to collect and transmit data from remote sites to central offices. John was a source of ideas for the fledgling Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System, under development by CFS in the 1960s. His modular concepts for a "Universal Burning Index" were adopted by the CFS Fire Danger Group as the Canadian Forest Fire Behavior Prediction System, a system still in use across Canada today.

John started Climax Land Management, a venture working with the ranchers clearing range land, and harvesting timber for portable mills. John was one of the first to utilize pine trees killed by beetles for dimensional lumber. John wrapped up his career by operating Baseline Prescriptions, providing all aspects of silviculture.

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